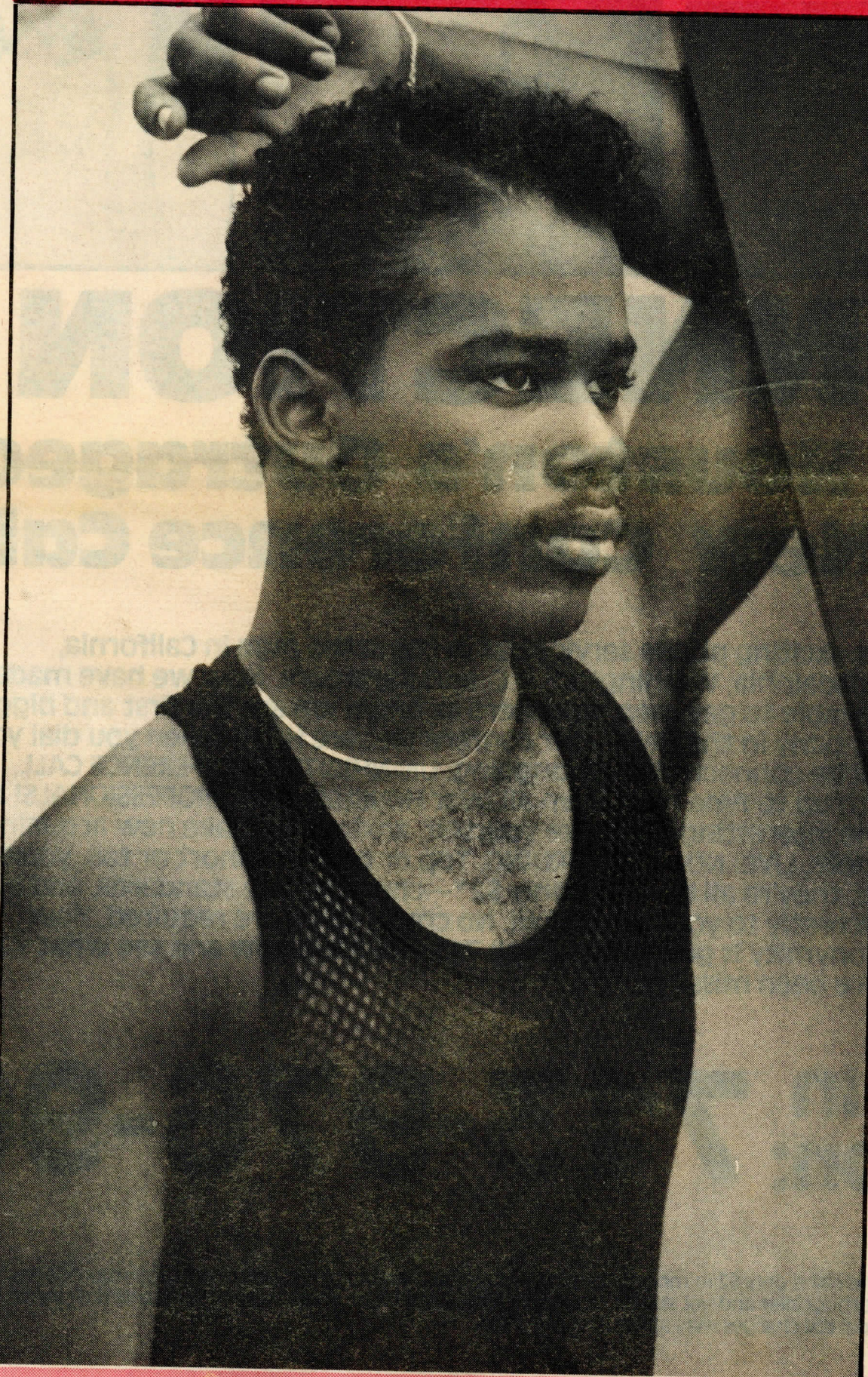


Volume 3, Number 17

H O U S T O N F O R U M

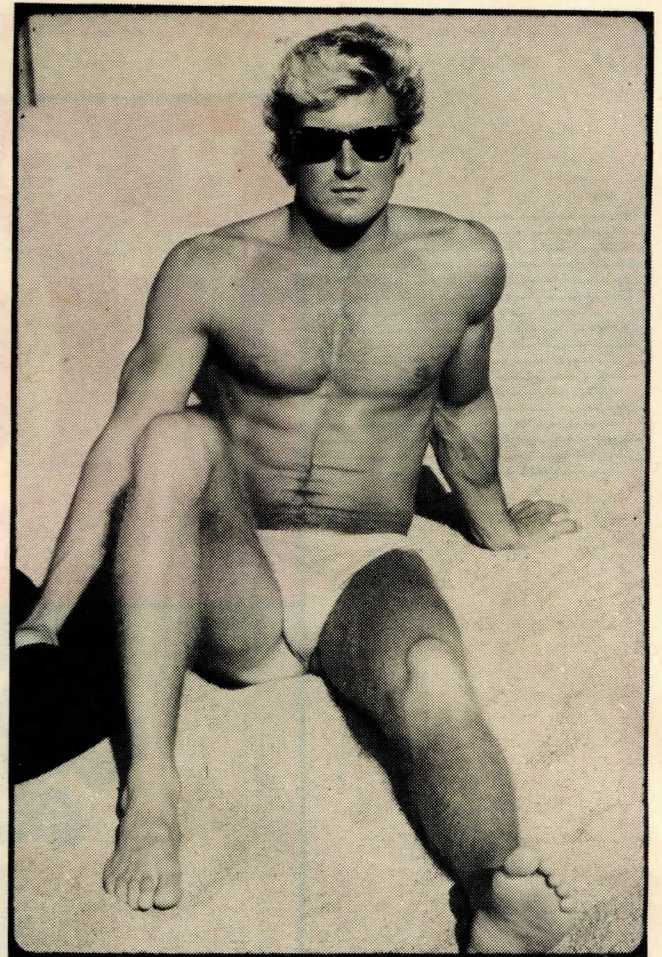
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LOYNELL BROOKS



April 24, 1987

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HOUSTON FORUM

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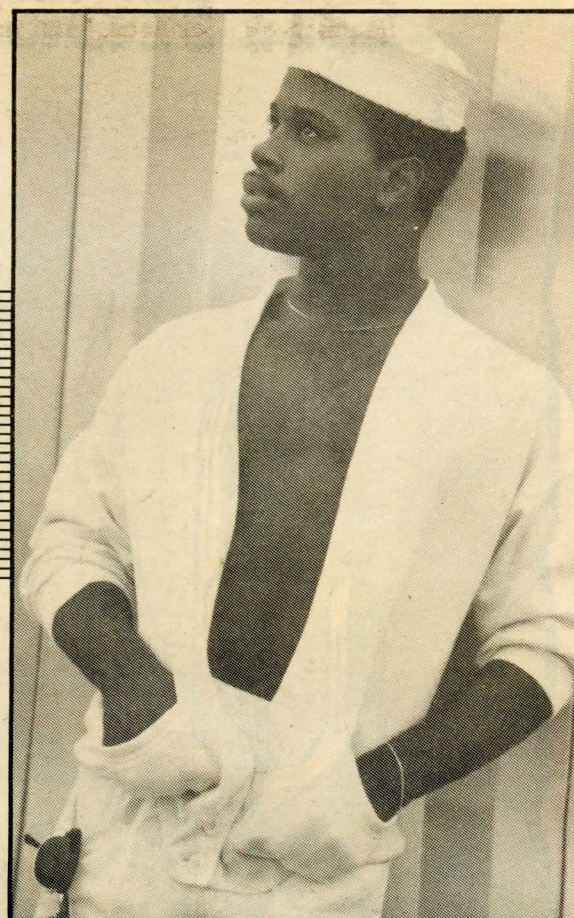
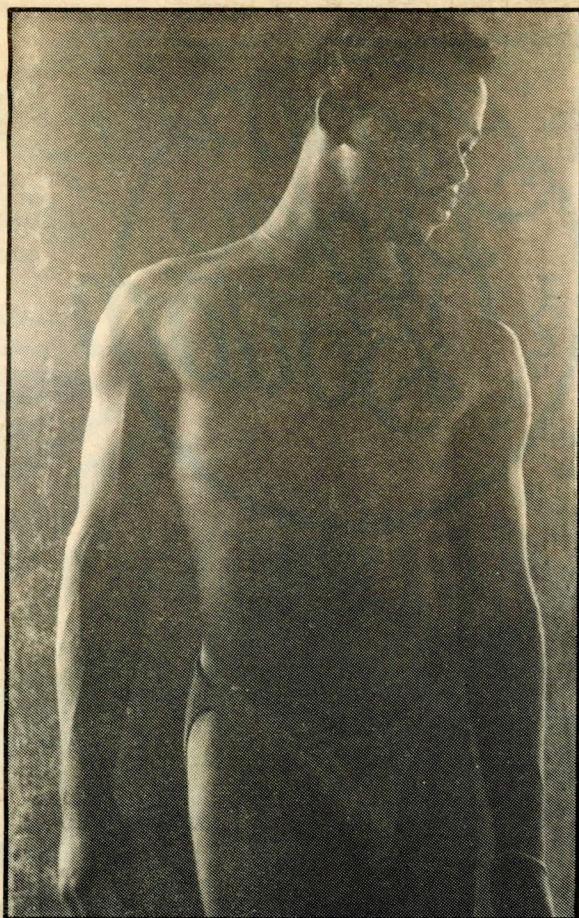
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BEHIND THE FRONT COVER

LOYNELL BROOKS



Born: 5/4/65 in Houston, Texas.

Occupation: Performer and student.

Favorite thing about Houston: Westheimer.

Hobbies: All sports, dance, fashion design, drawing.

Favorite bar: Studio 13.

Current projects: School, the Mr. Houston Pageant

Favorite activity: Of all my relations, I like sex the best. Seriously, performing.

Favorite color: Green.

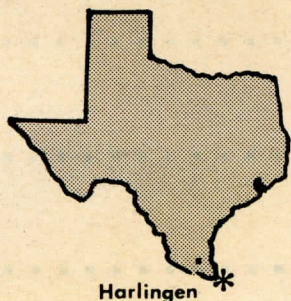
Sun sign: Taurus.

Favorite kind of man: Something resembling me.

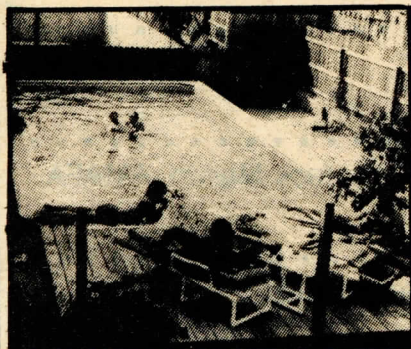
Message to the readers: You don't have to be big and bulky to be fine and sexy.

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EDITORIAL: LET'S GET REAL

There is nothing we have ever been taught or told to expect that can prepare us for the kind of reactions we might have as our friends die off one by one and we sit around thinking, could I be next?

No one can say to us, "Well, the last time I went through a plague, I handled it by such and such." Plagues are not common to our century, to our generation, to our country. And there is no one there to hand out advice based on experience of the terror of the personal reaction.

How do we handle it? How do we keep our sanity? How do we keep going on with productive lives? How do we keep our balance when our world is turning upside down weekly or even daily?

I don't know about you, but there doesn't seem to be a week go by for me when I don't hear about someone that I know who has died. And when someone tells another person, "Did you hear that so and so died?" The response generally is, "AIDS?" After a while, I start feeling a little numb.

But numbness is a reaction, not a way of dealing effectively with the grief and shock we face so often these days. Somewhere there must be a way to stay human in our reactions and not go insane in the process.

So, I've looked around to see how other people are handling the situation in order to determine if I could find some hints as to how to better handle it myself. And I found some very interesting things.

For one thing, people who have found a way to define their own relationship with eternity seem to have the best attitude in reacting to this crisis. This group includes those who have deep religious beliefs as well as those who do not believe in a hereafter at all. What comforts them is a sense of direction. Certainly, we're all aware of

people who find solice in prayer or feel that a loved one is "going to a better place," but it is not simply a religious plan that helps to ease a person's mind. It is any sense of acceptance that death is a part of life. People who have definitely decided that there is no God, no heaven, no eternal reward, also cope better with death than people who have not made up their minds yet.

You can laugh at Shirley MacLain, but her deep belief in the metaphysical aspects of our life is just the sort of thing that will carry you through. Having a feeling of being part of life helps us to understand death.

So, I've looked around to see how other people are handling the situation in order to determine if I could find some hints as to better handle it myself.

Another group of people (of course, these groups overlap) that seems to be coping better than the average are those individuals who are activists, who are out there trying to change the world, or at least a little part of it. These people find a way of coping by *doing* something, no matter how tiny the effort may seem in the big picture. They put on shows, they collect money, they write letters, they visit friends who are ill, they visit strangers who are ill. They get involved, and they don't feel as completely helpless as those who have not found a way yet to translate pain into action.

"How to Cope with Death"

By Randy Brown

Humor is also a way of dealing with the enormity of this crisis. If we can find a way to laugh, we can find a way to ease our troubled minds.

Self-involved people, people whose world is defined by personal reactions to everything are having a very hard go of it. I know a guy who reads the obituaries word for word so that he can figure out if he ever in his life came across a person who died, then he goes around and tells everyone that he knew the person, expecting sympathy and comfort. Give me a break! We have enough real problems.

People who drink to excess on a regular basis are having a rough time of it also. Despite what we would rather think, alcohol is a depressant, and when we drink all the time, we will be more affected by sorrow than if we don't. I know I have gone out when a friend has passed away and knocked them down until I was practically blind, but it's not an answer. And people who don't know how *not* to drink are finding it very hard to find direction in the midst of this epidemic.

Individuals without strong family or friendship ties are having a rough time. Even though it hurts to lose a friend, it is worse not to have any real friends to turn to when the going gets rough. Of course, a lot of people in the gay community have severed ties (not by choice) with family. This is particularly hard to deal with when the extended family of the community is struck by so much tragedy.

The other people who are having the roughest time are the deniers—those who pretend that none of this is affecting them and tell their friends, "Oh, stop that. He's gone and there's nothing you can do about it." They are not dealing with death at all, and it will come back to them some day.

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CAN WE TALK?

by Bar Wilson

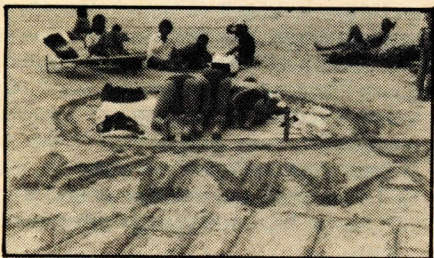
Hi Kiddies!

The past weekend was almost more than I could believe. There I was in Galveston and who should I see trying to be inconspicuous but Miss Vanna White. Hiding on the beach as only she can. (Hiding on a blanket with her named etched in the sand with letters at least 40 feet tall.)



The one and only Vanna White.

She was with just a few of her friends who were showing their best sides.



Vanna and friends showing their best sides.

You really must go to see Miss Vanna when she is at her best (silent). The Galleon's Tuesday's Twisted Wheel of Fun is without a doubt one of the sickest, most twisted events that these jaded ol' eyes have ever beheld (or ever hope to see at that). The entire audience gets into the act with either screeching at Vanna's antics or else yelling at their lovers who are on stage and can't see the answer to the puzzle when the entire bar is ready to call it out. To say the least about the Twisted Wheel of Fun is that it is something to take your out-of-town friends to because it is truly unique and truly sick (in a pretty way).

And speaking of the Galleon, last Sunday's Tony Rose Show was the TEA. If you didn't get to see the show then you really must plan on going to see the man(?) when he is in town again.



Tony Rose Show, the Galleon.



Tony Rose Show, the Galleon.

Tony does probably the best imitations of living personalities that anyone is currently doing.

Did you know that Jay Allen is in L.A. (No Patsy, wrong L.A.) You know how those Sagittarians are about going out of town. No doubt if past history runs true, poor Randy Smith will work himself half to death and have to have another 10 days off just to recover. (If you want the truth about that, it probably takes 10 days to catch up on all of his tricks he won't have time for now that Jay is out of town.)

Down at the 611, I ran into Steve Shimer—he was talking about getting rich producing a Broadway play. I understand the story is about a bunch of aboriginals who live in some huts and are stirring buffalo meat in a Macy's pot with Neiman Marcus sticks. Somehow I think that Steve and I were both a bit twisted. Anyway, if you haven't been in the 611 to see the Indian art by Wayne Means, it is really good and very interesting. Wayne put the art up and then left town for San Diego and the art will come down as soon as he gets back. (He's just that way, but most really good artists are—aren't they?)

I can't really tell everything about the Gay Fest '87 yet 'cause the plans are not final yet, but I can promise you this, if everything comes off as it is currently being planned, it will be the biggest gay event that this city has ever seen and will definitely be a good time. HOBO (Houston Organization of Bar Owners) is really going to shine.

Monday night, the Barn was real festive. Miss Owen (John) had her shift invaded by some unruly ruffians and a very sick twisted drag queen. We hope that John soon recovers.

Saturday night at Chutes saw the Tammy Faye Bakker look-a-like contest. It proved to be one of the biggest promotions that Chutes has seen. The emcee, Brucella Duvall, was in rare form as were the judges: Jerry Bird (Roosters), Lee Aldridge (local performer), John Bushland (TNT Shirts), Buddy (Patsy Cline) and Gary Varnell (president of Project DIAL).

The winner, TJ, received a check for \$100 and promised to perform her duties to the utmost of her abilities. They included: Praying for Miss Vacant Lot, speaking in tongues to the Straight Slate, teaching levitation to the GPC, faith healing the City Council, going to cosmotology school, and teaching us all how to keep our husbands rich and happy.



Brucella, emcee of Faye the Lady, Chutes.



TJ, winner of Tammy Faye Bakker look-a-like, Chutes.

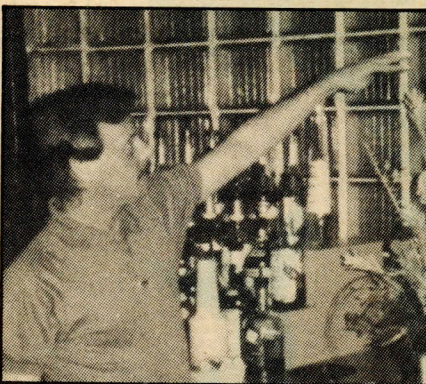
This weekend at Chutes sees Nightmare on Elmen Street IV. It's a benefit for Omega House and Allan Webster's birthday party. There will be a haunted house on the patio, free champagne and a buffet. It should be a lot of fun.

Don't forget that Chutes' skydiving club is having their first meeting on May 2 at 3 p.m. I can hardly wait to see Ted Lenze jump out of an airplane. Chola tells me that the first chute will be filled with confetti and they are planning to put in a kazoo in the second. That way Ted can play the same song that the band on the Titanic played when it was going down. Ted is also planning on having a logo competition. The deadline is July 1 and the person who has the winning logo will be announced on July 4th and receive \$200. (I might have to get out my own brushes for that one.)

Gary Varnell and Project DIAL are much in evidence these days. Gary is putting together a computer billboard on AIDS together with voice lines. This will allow persons with computers and without to get vital information about the disease and will vastly help the dissemination of accurate AIDS information to the general population. It's a great idea and Gary can use all the help he can get. Project DIAL's address is 1408 Richmond #150, Houston, TX 77006, and the phone is (713)523-4218.

Down at Mary's, guess who is now in management? George Robbins—that's right, gorgeous George, who kisses but doesn't tell. So by all means do feel free. Of course, how else would one feel at Mary's?

Last weekend saw Mecca's 2000 B.C. and there were plenty of neanderthals present (except for Ron Lacey—he only qualifies as a homo, not a sapien). It was a real twist on Easter and a lot of fun.



Just a home, Ron Lacey, Mecca.

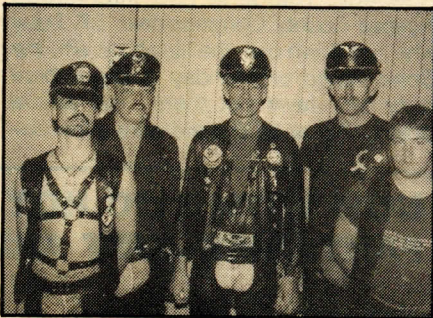
The Ripcord's Prime Choice contest is coming up the last weekend of this month. It will no doubt be a huge success like all the Ripcord's promotions. I did see Vince last Monday night and I am happy to report that he is doing very well. (I've also seen Boots out lately and the cast is off and he is looking very well.) Bill Rodriguez was playing music and it was real good, honey! (and ain't he pretty, too!).

Kindred Spirits' Super Sundays are still going strong and my friend Jim Bob tells me that he has been going strong and my friend Jim Bob tells me that he has been having such a good time at KS with the girls. Dummy—since when is it news that Kindred Spirits is a fun place to go or for that matter, that women's bars are a fun place to go? Ed over at E/J's tells me that business is picking up and that he appreciates the business, and all I can say is that I certainly give Ed the business every time I get a chance and definitely recommend you do the same.

This Sunday at Dignity Center, the parade will be finalized. I have heard a lot of talk one way and another about the route, etc. If you want to have input into the parade, I strongly suggest that you go to the meeting because if you don't, you have no excuse to be bitching about what several dedicated people are going to do with the project.

This weekend is the Westheimer Art Festival. I hope to see you all out in the spring sun and all you really pretty ones—wear tank tops or no shirts at all. I call it cheap thrills, but when you get as old as Jay Allen, Ed Moniger and myself, it is about the only kind that you can afford.

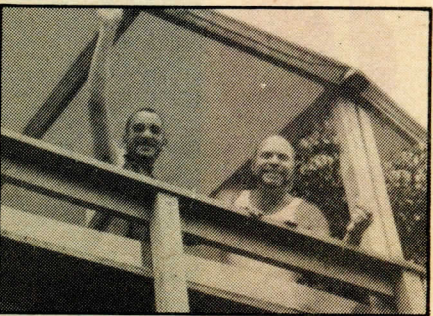
I just got in photos before deadline and I was feeling very remiss without putting these dandies in. The Disciples of De Sade were in town to give the Colonel and Mark their colors. Chutes put in a request for the club colors to make Chutes their home bar.



The colonel and DOD.

The High Heel race was a hoot. Starting at the Venture-N and ending at Chutes, several hours and bars later, the girls were too pretty. (Trust me on that one.)

Till next week.



Maria and Big Jim, the Venture-N.



Who scared the rabbit?



Bonnet judging, Chutes.

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FAST COPY: SOME OF THE NEWS THAT MIGHT BE FIT TO PRINT

Sharks, Sharks, Sharks!

Anyone care to go swimming in Port Aransas? It's not expensive; it doesn't cost an arm and a leg. In deference to 16-year-old April Dawn Voglino, I went out and ate a shark steak last night. Delicious! Of course, that's probably what the shark said after he chomped off April's right arm last week. Of course, the attack has not deterred the rest of the swimming world from going on out there and having fun in the waves. My favorite report was in the *Houston Post*, in a story by Michael Haederle. Haederle had interviewed Nueces County Commissioner J.P. Luby who had flown over the seashore with the Coast Guard on Monday to see if there were any Jaws out there. The article stated, "But all he spotted were a few dol-

phins and a scattering of surfers, he said." Surfers! Oh no! Surfer alert! Surfer alert! There go my plans to go to the beach.

Stalking the coastline of freedom and ripping off our first amendment rights, the Federal Communications Commission decided last week to expand its definition of obscenity. Of course, the Christian broadcasters are very happy. When is this insane right wing Nazi nonsense going to stop? Sure, some of the idiots on the air these days are pretty rude and crude, but who needs to listen to them anyway? As far as I'm concerned, you can feed Stevens and Pruett to that shark in Port Aransas, but that doesn't mean that they don't have a right to free speech. Come to think of it, I'm feeding the wrong people to the shark; let's have the next FCC convention in Port Aransas.

A shark of a different sort, Nazi criminal Karl Linnas, was sent to shore in the Soviet Union, where he has been sentenced to death. Since we deported him, he says we are responsible for his "murder." And whose murders has he not 'fessed up to himself, hmmm? That's what I love about the Nazis; the lives of people they hate are unimportant, but their own lives are precious and must be protected at all costs. What a crock! Good riddance to bad rubbish.

On the Other Hand . . .

Dick Shawn, whose Hitler in Mel Brooks' *The Producers* is one of the craziest comic bits ever filmed, delighted his audience last Friday night by collapsing face-down in a very silly-looking routine. After the initial laughter and applause, it was discov-

By "Perfectly" Frank Carello

ered that he had suffered a heart attack. Dick Shawn, dead at 57, went out like a comedian.

Remember when I said that I thought this whole Marine spy thing was a set up? Well, the main witnesses for the prosecution have recanted their testimony, saying that they were coerced into it. Of course, you may have missed the story. Although the news smearing the Marines was plastered all over the front page, the news of the recantation of the accusations was buried inside. I thought the press was supposed to be the watchdog, not the lapdog, of the government.

Talking about the good old government, they are trying to block a lawsuit filed by Japanese-Americans who were imprisoned during World War II for no other reason other than their ancestry. Even though the government says the action was "deplorable," they have no intention to pay for the property loss of the people they locked up. What did happen to all that property? Could it have gone to white people?

Animals and Gas

Belching cattle are going to mean the end of the world as it we know it, according to researchers. You see, methane gas is one of the culprits in producing the Greenhouse Effect, which will turn the world into a desert some day, and the gas is being produced in massive quantities by the inefficient digestive systems of cattle. So, the next time some cow belches around you, just slap her face. You'll be doing the world a favor.

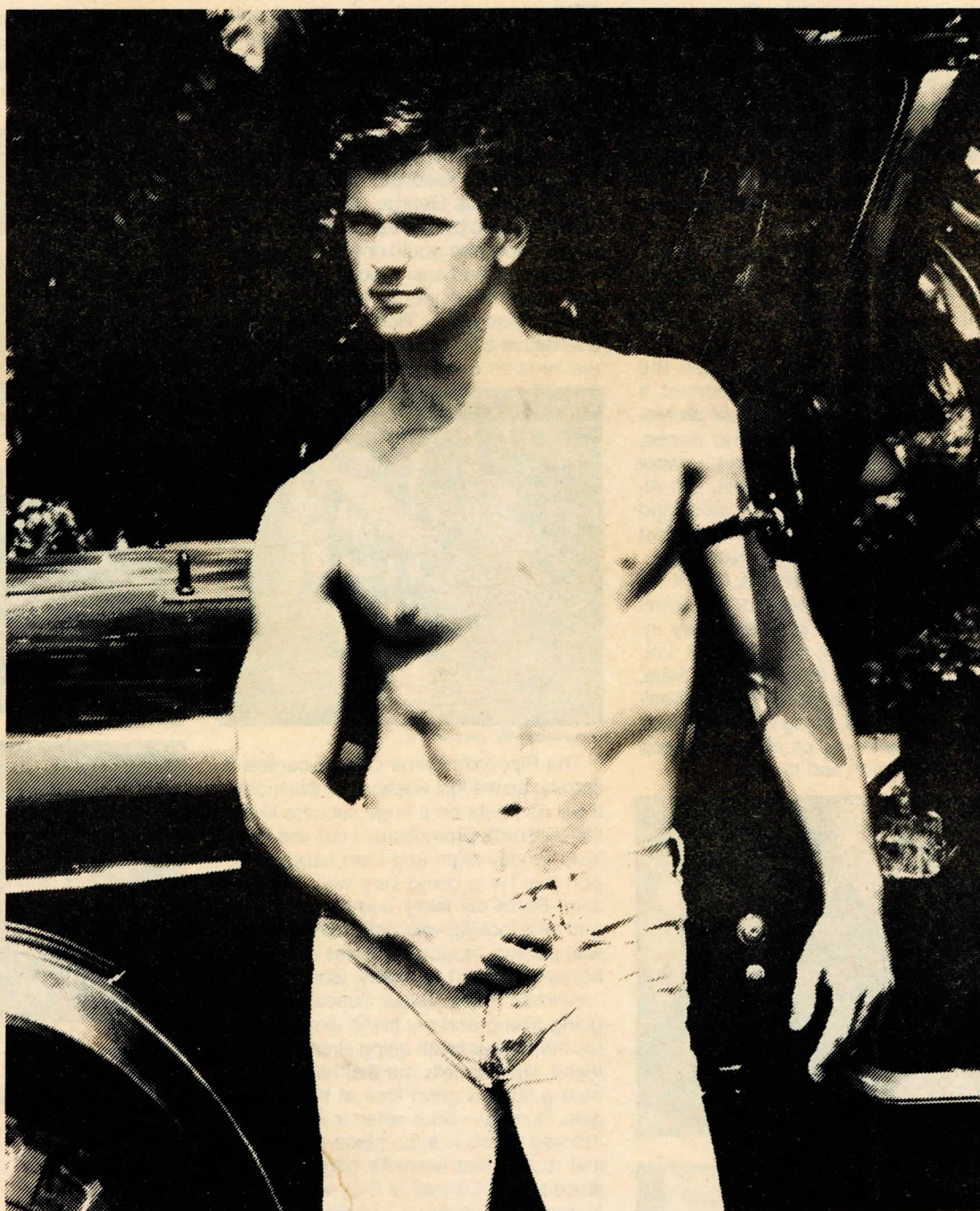
Also blowing gas, was Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who came up with a solution for U.S. race problems: create separate states for blacks and other minorities. What a great idea from a man who is trying to tell everyone that the world must work together for peace. Bull gas could also destroy the world.

But the top animal news is that scientists have captured the last wild condor. They're trying to save the breed, but it is a shame that they have to take away their freedom to do it. Couldn't they have left just a couple out there and let them see if they could make it? Of course, the male they captured had mated with a female in the wild, who had already been captured earlier. But if he thinks there's going to be any pay-off, he's in for a rude awakening; the female is making condor eyes at another male in captivity. Wow. He loses his freedom and he loses the girl. No one's going to make a musical out of this story.

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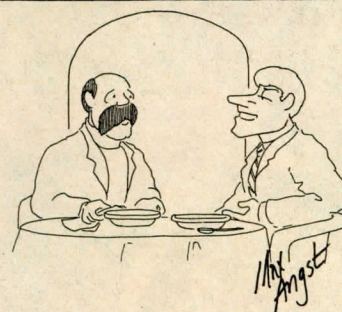
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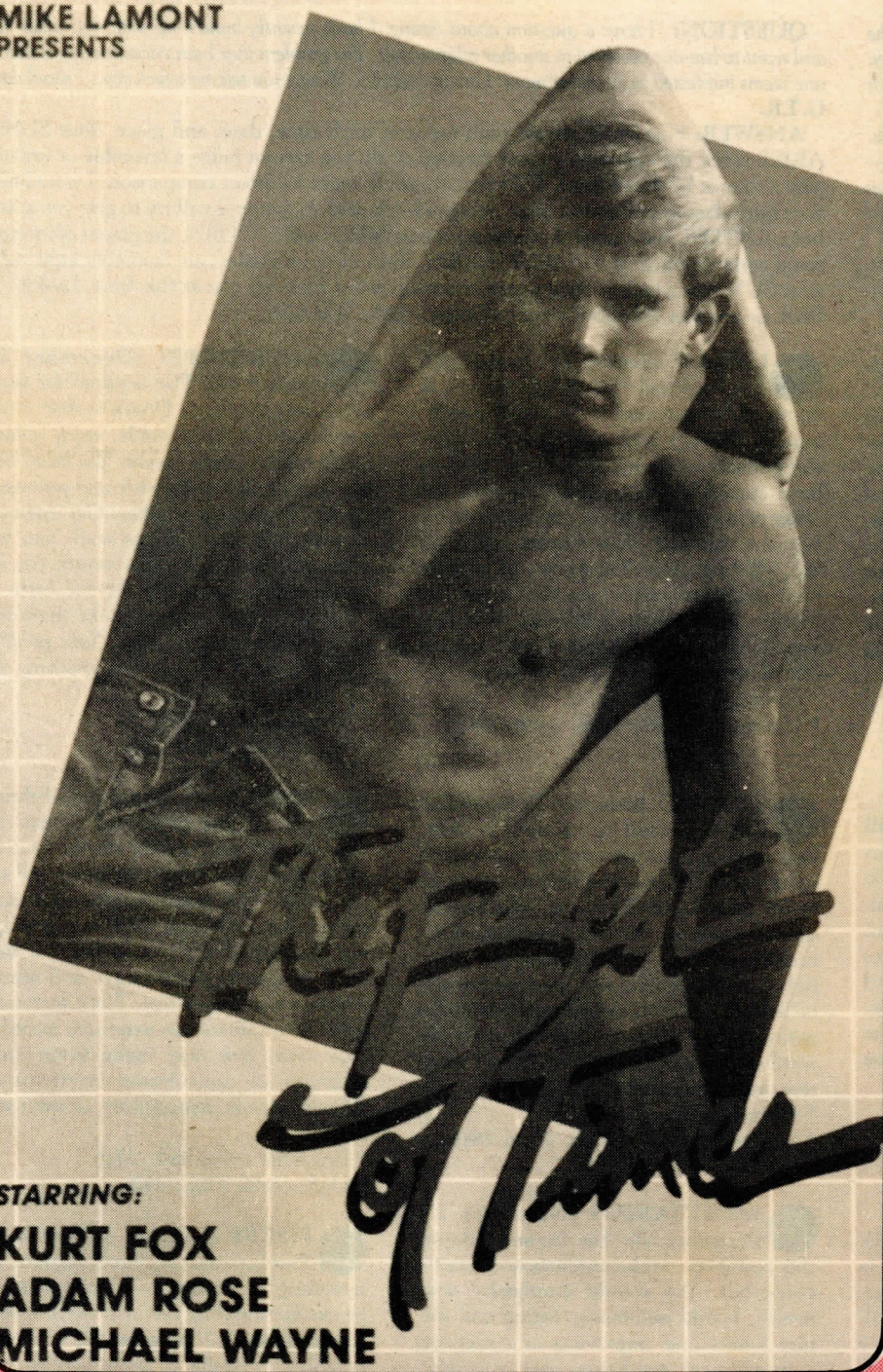
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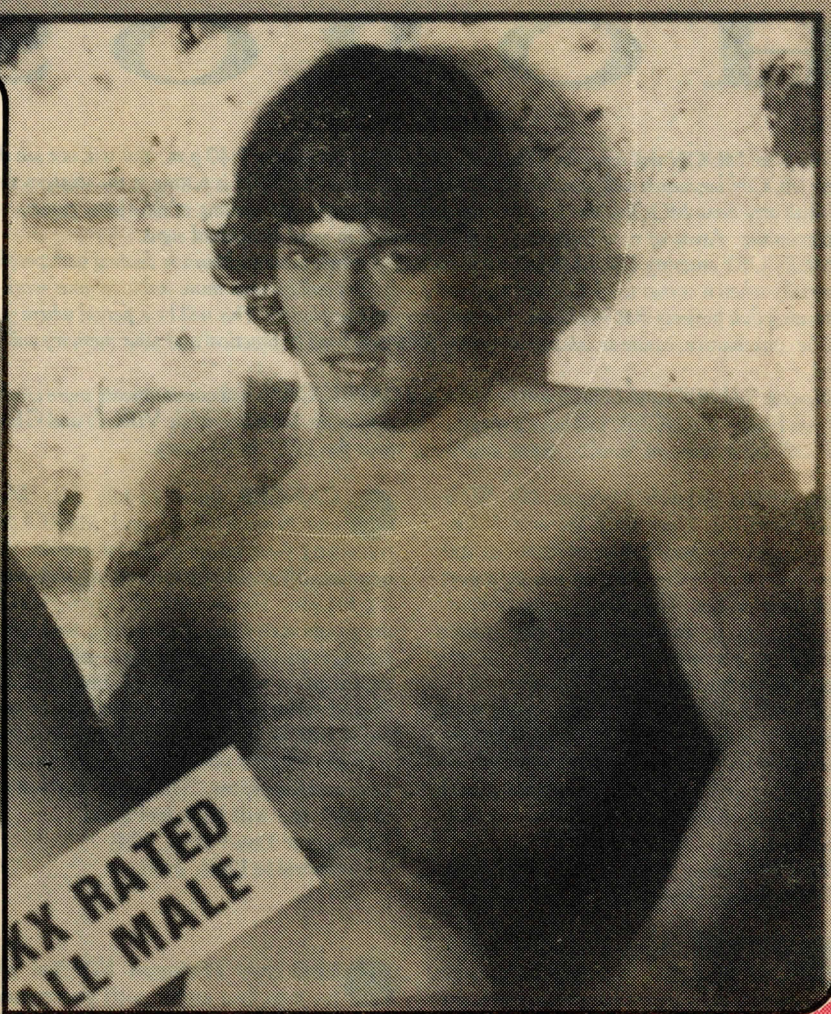
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MONA: Advice & Beads Read

Dear Mona:

What do you do when your friends don't write back? I'm always so good about writing people, but lately, nobody is writing back, and I'm getting mad. Should I write nasty letters, or should I just swallow my anger?

Signed: Ignored in Houston

Dear Ignored:

Sounds like you're writing for the wrong reasons. Are you writing to actually communicate to other people you love and care about, or are you writing to make yourself seem more popular through your mailbox? I think you need to look into your true motives for correspondence, and you may find that your anger is unfounded.

Dear Mona:

I have recently met a wonderful man who is everything I've been looking for. The trouble is that he's moving away next

month. I've lost so many friends lately moving away, I just don't what to do. Now, the person I think I love is gone, too. What should I do? Should I go with him?

Signed: Left and Lonely

Dear Left:

Mona advises that you either find some friends who plan to stay in Houston awhile, or decide to move. If you friend is really "the one," you should consider whether he really wants you to go with him. If he invites you, plan to go through some difficult times if you accept. You will have to establish yourselves in a new city with new people, and this can either make you very close, or it can create unwanted stress on your relationship. Frankly, I think it would be wonderful to "start over" with someone you love.

Dear Mona:

A friend of mine has recently discovered

some pretty strange red spots on his skin, but he's afraid to look into it with a doctor. He's afraid he'll find out the worst. I'm trying to get him to go to the doctor, but he refuses. He says if it's AIDS, he'll die anyway, so it doesn't make any difference. What should I do? How can I argue with that?

Signed: Freaking Out in Westwood

Dear Freaking:

If you can't get him to a doctor, you have to accept the fact that your friend really doesn't care for his own health, and you have to live with it, even though he may die. When people decide to ignore signals, disaster usually follows, and it's certainly not your fault. What do you think the whole business about Noah's ark was about?

Need advice? Having a particularly hard time of it all? Write **Mona**, care of the **HOUSTON FORUM**, 1110 Bayland, Houston, Texas 77009.

HOROSCOPES

by Jack Marvin, AMAFA

The New MOON will occur in TAURUS on Monday evening at 7:40 p.m. You will not see the New MOON because it will exactly conjunct the SUN just as the SUN is setting in the western sky. As with any New MOON, this is a time for new beginnings—the starting of new jobs, careers, or opportunities. Areas of new beginnings will be covered in your individual signs.

MERCURY entering TAURUS will make each of us a little more stubborn in dealing with people, especially when it comes to money and material goods. You will become more stable in your work—indicating that projects that you begin, you will carry to completion. This will be a period where you will be conservative, cautious, and constructive. Your mind will be practical and your memory will be good.

Notes: TAURUS and LIBRA will be lucky and CAPRICORNs will communicate more effectively on Friday. CANCERs will have a romantic encounter on Saturday, while VIRGO and GEMINI will fall in love on Sunday. Some emotional stress for LEO on Monday.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): With both the New MOON and MERCURY entering your house of finances and resources, now is the time for you to invest and make money. The plans you have been working on to increase your net worth should be put into effect now. If you are planning to buy or remodel a house, do it. During the next several weeks, all of your financial dealings will be positive. If you do not currently have a savings account where you make regular deposits, open an account during this week—you will be more apt to maintain it.

* Favorable Days: 24th, 25th, 26th, 30th
* Unfavorable Days: none

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): Personal changes are indicated for the next month—get a new hairstyle, go to the gym, and buy new clothes. Your popularity will be at its peak during the next several weeks, so bask in the limelight. You will be ego-conscious and quite eloquent when communicating with others during this period. You will be very "I" oriented and will have some difficulties understanding the feelings of others. You could be a little nervous and your curiosity will be at a high.

* Favorable Days: 25th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th
* Unfavorable Days: none

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): During the next month, your emphasis will be on confidential and investigative matters and you could have some dealings with the police. This period is favorable for you to have contacts with hospitals, institutions, and those that are incapacitated. If you have considered working with the AIDS Foundation, give them a call to volunteer your services. Stick to regular routines since you may lack some self-confidence. You will be good at analyzing other people's problems and will have an interest in Astrology.

* Favorable Days: 24th, 26th, 27th, 30th
* Unfavorable Days: none

CANCER (June 21-July 20): With the New MOON and MERCURY transiting your house of social events, this next month should be interesting and exciting for you. The accent, of course, will be on group activities, friendships, and social ties. Get involved with groups—either charity, social, or business, but get involved. You should actively pursue your goals since your mind will be active and original in ideas. Call friends that you have not seen in some time and simply say, "Hi, I was just thinking of you." You will both feel good.

* Favorable Days: 26th, 30th
* Unfavorable Days: 24th

LEO (July 21-August 21): You will have to deal either with government agencies, bosses, or important people. So put your best foot forward. Anything dealing with your career will require attention. This could mean that your responsibilities will increase or further education is needed to further your career goals or aspirations. You will receive honors and credits that are due you and your popularity will increase with the public.

* Favorable Days: 27th, 28th
* Unfavorable Days: 24th

VIRGO (August 22-September 21): Your keyword for this period is "education-conscious." Formulate long-range plans for the future. You will be dealing with people who are from afar or from a foreign country. This could require that you make several long-distance trips. You could also express an interest in foreign languages. Even though you are religious, at times you will have some doubts. Incidentally, have you noticed how much the TV evangelists resemble the "anti-christs" that the Bible warned us about?

* Favorable Days: 26th, 27th
* Unfavorable Days: 24th

QUESTION: "I have a question about dating. I have recently broken-up with my 'other half' and want to become involved in another relationship. The problem that I am encountering is that no one seems interested in a commitment. I am an ARIES. Would you tell me which signs I should date?"

G.T.R.

ANSWER: First of all, please send me your birth time, date, and place. Your SUN in ARIES is not the complete person. Second of all, you cannot judge a favorable or unfavorable romance by the person's SUN sign alone. To make a correct comparison, I would need your birth data as well as the other person's birth data. However, I will try to give you a little help. JUPITER, the planet of celebrations is in ARIES and SATURN, the planet of interpersonal commitments, is in SAGITTARIUS. Both of these planets are favorably aspected to your SUN sign which indicates a relationship is favorable for you at this time. Look to LIBRA or another ARIES for a relationship. J.M., AMAFA

LIBRA (September 22-October 22): The emphasis this month for you is on marital or partnership funds and your financial dealings with other people. Anything involving financial dealings that you have considered in conjunction with another person should prove very successful if begun at this time. Your interest in the occult will be increased and you will become more secretive, intuitive, and somewhat psychic. You could be a little sarcastic during the next several weeks. Guard against offending anyone with your tongue.

* Favorable Days: none
* Unfavorable Days: 25th, 26th, 28th

SCORPIO (October 23-November 22): You could be involved in some large scale negotiations during this month so have your facts straight before you engage in any deal. You will have to make concessions. Remember, the art of negotiation involves the art of compromise also. Relationships dealing with your partner will be honest, up-front, and refined during this period. Your relationship with a partner will involve communication that will be effective and understanding.

* Favorable Days: none
* Unfavorable Days: 27th, 28th, 29th

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): The keywords during this period are work-conscious and health-conscious. You should emphasize your health, bodily well-being, eating and dietary habits and improving or correcting your physical condition. Are you overweight? Get to the Parkway Athletic Club. Incidentally, guard against overworking during this period. Keep everything on an equal level. Don't "overdo" anything. This transit could cause you to become over-committed and have too many "irons in the fire."

* Favorable Days: 24th, 25th
* Unfavorable Days: 30th

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 17): The keyword for you is pleasure-conscious. Doesn't that sound wonderful? In other words, enjoy yourself for the next several weeks. You have been taking yourself too seriously and you need a break. Do you have a hobby? Get interested in something that you can really pass your time and relax with. This month you will become involved with several little romances, but don't try to make them long term. Now is not the time. Your speaking ability is good, and you like anything that stimulates your mind.

* Favorable Days: 26th
* Unfavorable Days: 24th

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18): "Home-conscious" is your keyword for the next several weeks. Your emphasis will be on family members and your home life. This could involve a parent or some older individual, such as a grandparent. Incidentally, you may become interested in your family ancestry and want to research your family tree. The Clayton Genealogical Library has extensive records in this area. You may make some major changes in your home environment through repairs, remodeling, or even moving.

* Favorable Days: 26th, 27th
* Unfavorable Days: 24th

PISCES (February 19-March 20): Your keyword is communication. Your reasoning and conversation powers should be excellent during the next several weeks. Your emphasis will be on brothers, sisters, or neighbors. Handle all personal correspondence during this period. You have neglected some of your correspondence recently. Catch up with it now. You may have to take several short trips during this month, but this will be good for you since you will be somewhat restless. Avoid overwork and over-worry. Let things happen.

* Favorable Days: 27th, 28th
* Unfavorable Days: 25th

If you have any questions, address them to JACK MARVIN, AMAFA, 1238 West Bell, Houston, TX 77019. Phone number: (713)520-5206. Please include your birth date, birth time, and birth place, if known. If you are asking a compatibility question, please include the above information for the other person, if known. Your questions will be answered as time and space permits. JM

Dear Fans, Amanda's mind is simply burning to know what the hell is going on over at the River Oaks Shopping Center. We remember when we first came to Houston and saw the pretty Art Deco facade, all white and gray, that it charmed our heart and made us want to run home and throw on our most elegant Erte gown. It has always been one of those nice places where you can easily meet the likes of Carolyn Farb purchasing new workout clothing to match that week's hair color—or Lynn Wyatt buying bronze polish for the porpoise fountains in her swimming pool. You could even catch a quick glimpse of Amanda as she rushed from store to store, looking for the right shade of turquoise belt to go with her torn chamoise Chamise for when our dear friends Chris L. and Danny B. would come over for all night slumber parties and pillow fights.

The other day, Sebastian was driving us through the River Oaks Shopping Center, when suddenly, we saw these gruesome new pillars at the front, facing the more aged and graceful columns of River Oaks! Then, we literally shrieked when we saw that someone had painted the brick trim of the entire center ORANGE!!! EEEEEEEEEKK!!

Oh, Dear Fans, with that hideous orange, mixed with the black awnings, the entire place looks like sort of Halloween bargain basement center, instead of the chic little place it was meant to be!

What made it worse is that our old high school in South Dakota had orange and black as its school colors. Halloween was always our BIGGEST time of the year, Dear Fans, and looking at the simply awful paint job on the River Oaks Shopping Center made us wonder who on earth would be



... with that hideous orange, mixed with the black awnings, the entire place looks like some sort of Halloween bargain basement center ...

tasteless enough to create such an abomination!

Orange is *not* a curante color, Dear Fans. We're sorry but whoever authorized that color scheme ought to be publicly hanged, then shot! What could they possibly be thinking of!

Then, to make matters worse, they have put the most ghastly little clocks on top of the main buildings, facing each other, as if we're really going to stand in the middle of West Gray and look from one to the other to see Greenwich and Eastern Standard Time. As if that isn't bad enough, they have

erected grotesque little pilasters with gaudy white globe lights on either side of the clocks.

Dear Fans, it sounds like some sort of moronic wedding cake design, done by inmates from the Tammy Fae School of Tasteful Design for the Holy Savior.

As we drove away, wretching loudly and miserably into the air flight bag we had mercifully stolen from our last Continental flight, we suddenly had a horrible thought. What if the mid 80's were actually one of those rare, brief times when good taste and relatively enlightened design reigned supreme—only to be superceded by another longer Dark Age of fetid trash? What if wonderful Art Deco shopping centers like the River Oaks Center all suddenly became orange and black, with mongloid wedding cake clocks on their roofs? If this is the case, dear fans, then we may all just as well throw ourselves into a vat of boiling nail polish remover and call it quits!

When we got home, we sat down next to our phone and wondered who we should call to complain to. We thought of our dear friend, Kathy Whitmire, but nobody has seen her for so long, we weren't sure whether she would be able to influence even people with bad taste. So we decided to put on our plastic radiation leak suit and go over to R. Appleby's house to paint his garage green. It was a hideous green, Dear Fans, but it was just a preservation primer. Like most people with good taste, he will at least paint over the green with a nice earthtone to match his Victorian house. Thank God he hates orange. Amanda feels like boycotting the River Oaks Shopping Center on the grounds of insensitive color arrangement!

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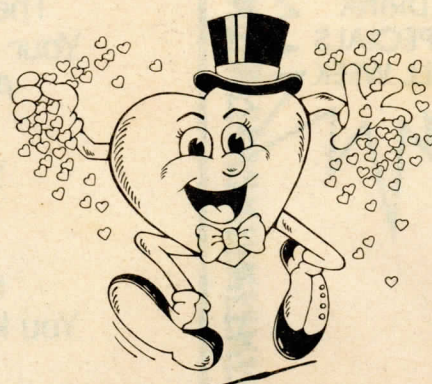
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By Jeff Bray

This weekend, I'm going to attend a memorial service for Scott Cutsinger. Many of you will remember him as the man who did the movie reviews for the Montrose Voice for so many years. He was really an excellent writer, who loved his subject matter. In fact, he loved it a little too much.

Scott was always so infatuated with the movies. I remember first meeting him when I worked for the Voice myself back in 1983-4. He was a tall, thin, handsome young man—very quiet and serious and slow moving. He delivered his column every week, with a regularity and a consistency that won him the admiration of the editor, and of me. In fact, when I took over management of the **FORUM** back in 1985, Scott did my movie reviews on the sly. I really wanted him, because I knew he was the best in town—and I can truthfully say that we paid him for his efforts, but never enough.

You couldn't pay Scott enough for the good work he did. But you didn't have to pay him, really. He was so crazy about the movie industry that he would have done it for free. He knew every theater manager in the city, and he easily got into movie previews, because everyone knew who he was. Sometimes he would see as many as three movies in one day, and then he would consume vast quantities of publicity material from the major studios in Hollywood, who sent him photos and news releases about new attractions.

When Scott worked for me, I grew to love him as a hard working, gentle, soft spoken man. His health never seemed very good, and I remember his fulltime job at a state school for the handicapped in Richmond used to completely exhaust him in the summer. He worked in the greenhouse, in the torturous heat, grow-

ing plants and helping retarded kids find some pleasure in the nature around them. While sweating to death in the wicked Texas summers, Scott would sit in the greenhouse and pound out his weekly columns on an old typewriter, then speed

When Scott worked for me, I grew to love him as a hard working, gentle, soft spoken man. His health never seemed very good . . .

into the city to deliver them in time before deadline.

He hated that job. He told me it was killing him out there in that heat, and I remember feeling that he was right, because he was growing so pale and so thin. Few people could stand that sort of punishment, but Scott was not very strong to begin with, so it took a terrible toll on his health.

Finally, he made a dream come true. He had always wanted to go to Hollywood, where he could do his movie reviews where the real action was. It was a dream he had had ever since his Indiana childhood. He was a Purdue graduate. There was no reason why he couldn't make it in L.A. So, he finally went out on vacation and found a job, then came back and packed his things.

He was so excited. I remember he coughed on the phone when he talked to me, complaining of his sinuses, which were always bothering him. I introduced him to a dear friend of mine in West Hollywood, who befriended him when he first

went out there. At least he would have someone he knew out there. He left Houston with a truckload of furniture, and his life's ambitions before him. Unfortunately, by the time he reached L.A., he was so sick and weak, he could barely get out of the truck.

In two days after he arrived in Hollywood, Scott was diagnosed with AIDS. He entered the county hospital and never fully recovered. For over a year, he lingered between life and death—sometimes fully aware and other times completely delirious. And my friend Jim took care of him, as did other friends from Houston. Eventually, dear friends brought him back here and nursed him.

It was so cruel. I couldn't believe that God would be so terrible as to give Scott his dream, then just take it away from him like that. Scott couldn't believe it, either. He never really acknowledged the fact that he was dying. Like the movies he so fanatically lived by, he somehow thought it was all just something that would go away when the film ran out. But when the film ran out Scott died. And unlike *Dark Victory*, his death wasn't noble and mercifully quick.

Houston will miss Scott Cutsinger—probably one of the city's most talented writers. I know that, because of him, I'll never see movies in the same light again.

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It's closer to the truth
to say you can't get enough —
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